

WORKING PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, UNITE!

KIM IL SUNG

**TALK WITH AN AMERICAN
EVANGELIST**

April 2, 1992

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I warmly welcome you, Mr. Billy Graham, to my country. I am delighted to be making a friend of you, a celebrated American evangelist, after you came such a long way to visit my country.

I thank you for congratulating me on my upcoming birthday.

I wish you good health, too. You look very well, considering your advanced years.

I often say to my officials that in our country 60 is the prime of youth and 90 is old age. This phrase is often seen on the backdrop of the mass gymnastic performances staged by our students and other young people. I hope it holds true for you.

You say you wish I might celebrate my 100th birthday as if it were my 60th; I thank you for that.

You say that my officials have accorded you and your party an exceptionally hospitable reception, providing you with excellent living conditions, including lodgings; it is natural that they should do so. Since olden times it has been the custom among Koreans to receive guests warmly.

I thank you for conveying a verbal message from the US president to me. I welcome his message.

We hope that DPRK-US relations will improve. It is not impossible for the two countries to become friendly. I believe this is possible, if the US adopts a positive approach towards us. I think that the US president and I can meet at an appropriate time and exchange opinions on improving relations between our two countries. If things go well, a new spring may begin in the relationship. I want you to convey what I have said to your president.

I hope that your current visit to my country will signal the beginning of a new spring in DPRK-US relations.

I am also glad that the Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City also had you convey a verbal message to me as his special envoy during your visit to my country. I have never made direct contact with the Pope, but now I have made indirect contact with him through you. I would be grateful if you would inform him that I thank him for the verbal message he sent me.

You say that you have realized during your stay in the DPRK that Americans, too, have things to learn here; it would be good if you take this opportunity to tour various places in my country and acquaint yourself with the reality here.

In my country there is no gulf between rich and poor as there is in the US and other countries which claim to be developed.

I have heard that in the US there are many people without shelter who sleep on the street, or beg for food or money, or are addicted to drugs or unemployed.

You say that in your country many people are unemployed and living outdoors or under bridges without shelter; you know this, because you yourself live there.

It is said that, although the US is a developed country, there is a lot of crime there. When I met a home-visiting Korean scholar who used to live in the US, he told me: There are many robbers in America; you must always have 500 dollars or so on you when you go out in the street so that you have some money to hand over immediately to armed robbers when they demand it; otherwise you will be shot and killed.

In my country there is no one who lives in the open without shelter or begs for money; neither are there drug addicts, thieves or jobless people. All our people have a house and are living happily, free from worries about food and employment. There is no one who is particularly rich or poor; everyone is equally well-off.

Americans say they like the US style, but we prefer

our own style. You believe in God, but we believe in Man, not in God. Man is the master of everything. It is better to believe in Man than in God. That is why we regard the people as heaven and devote our all to them.

I can say that among the Americans who have visited my country you are one who has a proper understanding of it. If many Americans visit my country and witness the reality here for themselves, they will be able to correct their misunderstandings. If they come to our country, see the reality here and meet the people, they will be well aware of how preposterous a lie is the claim by some people that north Koreans are monsters with horns on their heads, and they will no longer believe their propaganda. I hope the peoples of our two countries will often exchange visits.

You have spoken highly of how Pyongyang's appearance has changed, and of our work; I thank you for that.

You have said that, of the leaders of many countries around the world, you have a special respect for me, since I regard the people as the masters of the country and take such good care of them. I intend to do more for the good of the people in the future, too.

As your wife studied in Pyongyang before Korea's liberation, she must know the city well. The Japanese imperialists who were occupying Korea at the time told the foreigners, including the Christians, who were resident in Korea to leave if they were not prepared to pay respects at their shrines, as they themselves did. I think that was why your wife left Pyongyang. We are aware of what was happening in those days. Even the Korean Christian priests were expelled. The Reverend Kim Song Rak, whom I know well, was exiled from Pyongyang and went to the US. He was following in his father's footsteps by becoming a priest. He visited his homeland in 1981 at the age of 80. When I met him, he told me that he was living in a priests' village in Washington. He passed away a few years ago.

You have said that your wife regards Korea as her home country; that is quite good.

I invite her to visit my country. It would be good if she could visit our country and see how Pyongyang has changed since she lived here. Of the buildings in Pyongyang from those days only the Pothong and Taedong gates remain. She will be deeply impressed if she comes to the city and sees them.

You say that it is a privilege and great honour for you during your visit to the DPRK that I met you and

arranged a luncheon for you today; I thank you for that.

Our country breeds rainbow trout to supply to the people and to export. The rainbow trout our country raises came originally from the US.

Americans operated a gold mine in Unsan long before Korea's liberation. At the time, they brought the fish from their country and bred them there. Then, several years before Korea's liberation, the Americans living here were forced by the Japanese to return to their country. They included those who were running the mine in Unsan. Later, the Japanese took over the mine and raised the rainbow trout. So, the miners there assumed it was the Japanese who had introduced the rainbow trout. They hated the Japanese so bitterly that, after Korea's liberation, they planned to exterminate all the rainbow trout, as a fish the Japanese had raised.

On learning about this, I told them it was the Japanese imperialists, not the fish, that were bad and that it would be a good idea to protect and propagate the rainbow trout since there were only a few of them left. That is how the rainbow trout proliferated. Now they are raised across our country.

You have asked me about the prospects for the former Soviet Union; I think we must wait and see.

The former Soviet Union is divided into several countries, some of which may merge in the future. I think that, although these countries cannot form a federated state again as it used to be, some of them may form something like a “union.” As for the future of the former Soviet Union, it will be decided by the peoples of the countries which belonged to it. We are also watching to see what will become of it.

You have said that your family and the First Family of your country are on friendly terms; that is good.

You say that your interpreter is a professor from an American university; he speaks Korean very well. His pronunciation is quite accurate.

I hope I will meet you often as a friend in the future.

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